

- Total labour income rose 3.3% in 2003
- Real tourism GDP expanded by a meagre 0.4% in 2002
- Building permits rose 19.4% in January

## The Economy

- **Total labour income in BC was up 3.3% in 2003, reaching \$74.2 billion.** This was basically the same income growth rate as at the national level (+3.4%). Ontario posted the lowest income growth last year (+2.7%). The highest labour income growth was in Alberta (+4.6%) and Newfoundland & Labrador (+4.6%).

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **British Columbia has the least export-intensive economy among the provinces.** Total exports (international and inter-provincial) represented about 42% of GDP in BC in 2002. For Canada as a whole, exports make up a much larger share of GDP (58%). The most export-intensive province is New Brunswick (75% of GDP), followed by Saskatchewan (65%).

Two-thirds (66%) of BC's exports are sold on the international market, while the remainder are sold to other provinces. In both international and inter-provincial exports, their share of BC's GDP is the lowest in Canada.

*Data Source: SC, Catalogue no. 11-621-MIE*

- **The value of building permits issued in BC was up 19.4% (seasonally adjusted) in January.** Permits for commercial buildings led the expansion (+98.8%), while the value of industrial building permits fell (-36.8%) for the third consecutive month. Residential permits—the largest category—rose 9.1%.

Building permits in BC have been on an upward trend since the fourth quarter of 2000. However, there is a great deal of month-to-month variation, even after adjusting for seasonal factors.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC was the only western province to see rising building permits in January.** In Sas-

katchewan (-40.1%), Alberta (-20.2%) and Manitoba (-11.4%), the value of permits dropped. Across Canada, permits inched downward by 0.9%.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

## Tourism

- **British Columbia's tourism sector was sluggish in 2002.** Real tourism GDP expanded by a meagre 0.4%, well below provincial GDP growth of 2.2%. Accommodation and food service (-0.1%) and transportation (+0.1%) were the main weak points, with virtually no change from the previous year. Tourism-related retail trade, in contrast, posted strong growth (+5.0%), largely counterbalanced by declines in other services.

*Data Source: BC Stats*

- **The tourism sector contributed \$5.0 billion (constant 1997 dollars) to provincial GDP in 2002.** By comparison, tourism's contribution is significantly larger than mining and oil & gas extraction (\$2.7 billion), and similar in size to the construction industry (\$5.3 billion). It is a bit more than half the size of the forestry sector (\$8.9 billion, including pulp and paper manufacturing).

*Data Source: BC Stats*

- **There were 115,500 people working in BC's tourism sector in 2002, representing 7.2% of the province's workforce.** Tourism employment was virtually unchanged from 2001 (+0.4%).

*Data Source: BC Stats*

## Strikes and Lockouts

- **There were 193,890 person-days lost to work stoppages (strikes and lockouts) in BC in 2003.** This was a sharp increase from the year before (+151%), though 2002 was a year of unprecedented labour-management peace. The number of days lost to strikes and lockouts in 2002 was

Did you know...

8% of BC homeowners feel the need to compete with their neighbors for the greenest lawn.

only 77,350 – the lowest level on record.

*Data Source: Human Resources Development Canada*

- **Labour-management conflicts have eased considerably over the last two decades.** During the 1980s, there was an average of 1.03 million person-days lost to work stoppages each year. In 1986, the number of days lost from strikes and lockouts peaked at 2.9 million. In the 1990s, there was an average of 338,000 days lost each year – 68% less than during the 1980s. And in the first four years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was an average of 260,000 days lost to labour-management conflict (75% less than the 1980s).

This decline in person-days lost has occurred despite the fact that BC's workforce has nearly doubled since 1980 (+90%), and the number of union members in BC has increased 24%. Labour-management relations in the province have clearly become much less confrontational.

*Data Source: Human Resources Development Canada*

### Gambling Revenues

- **The BC Lottery Corporation (BCLC) earned \$1.79 billion in gambling revenues in 2002/03, up 11.5% over the previous year.** Just over \$650 million was paid out in prizes – 36.3% of total revenues. Profits amounted to \$671 million (37.4% of revenues).

Since the BCLC was established in 1974, its revenues and profits have increased every year. In 1980, revenues from gambling were about \$74 million. Adjusting for inflation, that figure would be \$166 million in 2003 dollars. Thus, real (after inflation) gambling revenues have grown 980% since 1980.

*Data Source: BC Lottery Corporation*

- **According to BCLC, about 4% of people who participate in gambling have gambling problems.** Roughly \$3.3 million - 0.2% of gambling revenues - were directed to the Problem Gambling Program in 2002/03.

*Data Source: BC Lottery Corporation*

### Nuclear Energy

- **There were 72,350 gigawatt hours of nuclear energy generated in Canada in 2001 – 13% of total energy production.** Three provinces in Canada operate nuclear reactors for energy

generation. In Ontario, nuclear power is the province's largest energy source, accounting for 41% of energy supply. In New Brunswick, 23% of energy is nuclear-generated. In Quebec, nuclear power contributes a modest 3% to total supply.

*Data Source: SC Catalogue no. 57-204-X1B*

- **There are 17 nuclear reactors in operation in Canada, all of which are CANDU (Canada Deuterium Uranium) designs.** Canada's first nuclear reactor began operation in 1945. Uranium mining started in 1953. In 1962, Canada began generating nuclear energy for the electricity grid.

CANDU nuclear reactors have been exported to six different countries worldwide: India, Pakistan, South Korea, Argentina, Romania, and most recently China.

*Data Source: CANDU Owners Group*

### The Nation

- **Canada's balance of international trade posted a current account surplus of \$7.3 billion in the third quarter of 2003, an increase of 45% from the previous quarter.** The increase was largely due to an increasing surplus on goods trade. There was also a lower deficit on services trade and investment income.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Canadian agricultural production totalled \$45.9 billion in 2002, up 1.2% from the year before.** This was the fifth consecutive year of increase. Alberta was the largest agricultural producer (\$12.3 billion), followed by Ontario (\$10.8 billion), and Quebec (\$7.1 billion). In BC, agricultural production was valued at \$2.7 billion.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada*

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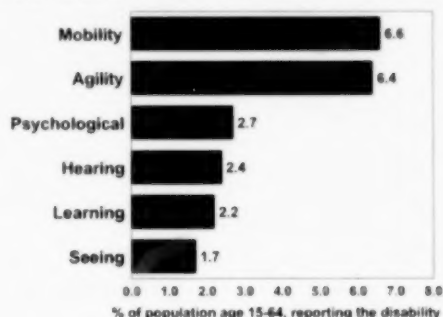
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## Persons with Disabilities—Their Participation in the Workforce

Statistics Canada conducted a *Participation and Activity Limitations Survey (PALS)* in 2001 as a follow-up to the Census. The survey targeted persons who identified on their Census return that their everyday activities were limited because of a physical or mental condition or a health problem.

### Types of disabilities and the aging process

In 2001, 11.2 per cent of the working age population in BC had a disability. Agility and mobility were the most prevalent problems but psychological disabilities were also a major factor.



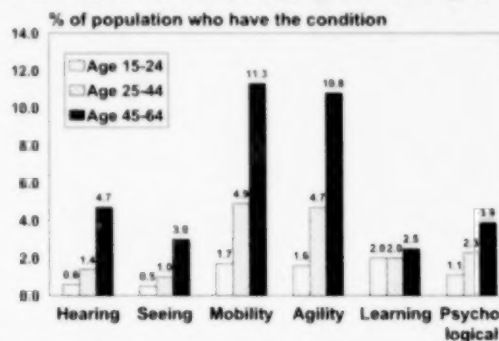
The results from this survey show that in BC more than one out of 10 persons (11.2%) in the working age population, defined here as those age 15 to 64, had a disability. The conditions most prevalent were mobility and agility (over 6 per cent of the population are affected) and psychological problems (just less than 3 per cent noted the disability).

As one would expect, the probability of having a disability increases with age. Once disabled, an individual is often afflicted for the remainder of their life, meaning that as an age cohort moves through life, more and more of the cohort develop disabilities through disease or injury. In 2001, the breakdown of disability rates by age group within the 15-64 year old population was as follows:

Age	% Disabled
15-24	4.9
25-44	8.4
45-64	17.8

Besides the incidence of disability increasing, the types of conditions also vary by age.

The profile of the disabled by type of disability varies dramatically between the young and the middle aged.



Note: Many of the disabled have multiple conditions. Mobility and agility problems particularly go hand-in-hand.

The previous chart shows how the stage of life shapes the profile of persons with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> Among the young, the most prevalent condition is learning disabilities. As this problem is not likely to develop after childhood, the probability of having a learning disability remains fairly constant as one ages. However, other health problems resulting from the wear and tear of living, such as mobility and agility, become far and away, the most prevalent disability in the later years of life.

As well, among those disabled, the severity of the disability increases with age. Less than half the young age group (age 15-24) had more than

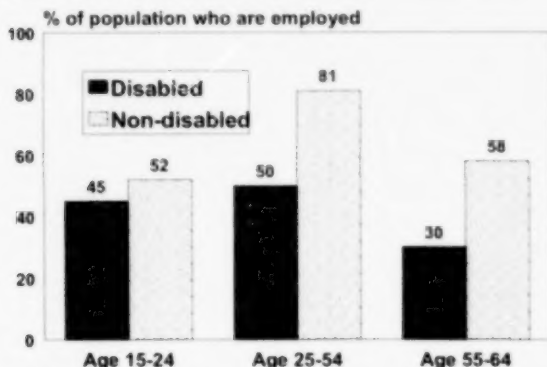
<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to look at the chart from the perspective of one age cohort moving through life, although the age cohorts displayed are all different groups of people.

a mild disability compared to two-thirds of those aged 25-64.

Pain is a big issue for the disabled. Of all those who reported a disability, three out of four suffered from pain. That translates to 8 per cent of the working age population suffering from a debilitating pain. This is true for 3 per cent of the 15-24 year olds and for 13 per cent of all those age 45-64.

## Disabilities and the Workplace

*Labour market outcome comparisons between the disabled and non-disabled show only small discrepancies among the young but towards the end of a worklife, those with disabilities are half as likely to have a job as those without disabilities.*



Among the prime working age population, those age 25-54, only 50 per cent of the disabled population have a job. This compares to 81 per cent among those not disabled. The difference is even more dramatic for the 55-64 year olds, where those without disabilities are more than twice as likely to hold a job than the disabled.

This low employment participation among the disabled has a major impact on the size of the workforce in BC. If persons with disabilities were able to work at the same level as their counterparts without disabilities, there would be an additional 80,000 persons age 25 to 64 with jobs. While it is not reasonable to assume that all the disabled would be able to work, it is not out-of-line to project that one-half that number could work if conditions were right. This translates into an additional 40,000 (or 2%) potential work-

ers whose skills are not being utilized in today's labour market.

Furthermore, because most of those in the 25-64 age group who are disabled acquired their disability well after the age of 25, they would have completed their education and attained many years of work experience prior to becoming disabled. In fact, the education attainment of the disabled and the non-disabled are not that different—for example, the proportion of the disabled population with a post-secondary credential is 52 per cent, only 7 percentage points lower than the 59 per cent reported by the non-disabled.

In conclusion, there is a pool of well-educated and experienced potential workers out there, who if given the opportunity could contribute directly to the economy of the province. With labour shortages on the horizon, it could very well behave employers to examine their policies on accommodating persons with disabilities in their workplaces, be it through providing accessible facilities and appropriate equipment; flexible hours and shorter work weeks or allowing work to be done from the home.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitations Survey 2001 (PALS)*



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also on the Internet at [www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca)

## BC at a glance . . .

<b>POPULATION (thousands)</b>		
	Oct 1/03	% change on one year ago
BC	4,158.6	0.8
Canada	31,714.6	0.8
<b>GDP and INCOME</b>		
(BC - at market prices)	2002	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	135,552	2.7
GDP (\$ 1997 millions)	128,151	2.4
GDP (\$ 1997 per Capita)	31,143	1.5
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1997 per Capita)	19,576	0.1
<b>TRADE (\$ millions, seasonally adjusted)</b>		
		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Dec	2,741	-2.3
Merchandise Exports - Dec	2,306	0.9
Retail Sales - Dec	3,409	-0.5
<b>CONSUMER PRICE INDEX</b>		
(all items - 1992=100)	Jan '04	12-month avg % change
BC	120.8	2.0
Canada	122.9	2.5
<b>LABOUR FORCE (thousands)</b>		
(seasonally adjusted)	Jan '04	% change on prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,236	0.6
Employed - BC	2,072	0.0
Unemployed - BC	163	8.1
		Dec '03
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	7.3	6.8
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.4	7.4
<b>INTEREST RATES (percent)</b>		
	Mar 3/04	Mar 5/03
Prime Business Rate	4.00	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	4.30	4.90
- 5 year	5.80	6.60
<b>US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE</b>		
	Mar 3/04	Mar 5/03
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$	1.3476	1.4723
US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)	0.7469	0.6808
<b>AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE</b>		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jan '04	% change on one year ago
BC	676.81	-0.4
Canada	673.55	2.3

### SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, } Statistics  
 Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Canada  
 Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics  
 For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see [www.bankofcanada.ca](http://www.bankofcanada.ca)

## Provincial Electoral District Profiles



We have just added additional area profiles based on the 2001 Census to our site. Each 18-page profile details the demographic and dwelling characteristics in a series of charts and tables. The comparative charts, sorted data, share calculations, 2001 election results, and links to maps provide a ready and comprehensive overview of each riding.

The PED profiles have been added to our general 2001 Census Profile page. Other new additions to this page are profiles for Vancouver Island and for each of the eight development regions.

PED profiles:

[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/profiles/csd\\_txt.htm#PED\\_mark](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/profiles/csd_txt.htm#PED_mark)

2001 Census profiles:

[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/profiles/csd\\_txt.htm](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/profiles/csd_txt.htm)

### Released this week by BC STATS

- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 4th Quarter 2003

### Next week

- Tourism Sector Monitor, February 2004

